

19 November 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Medical Services

FROM:  Ph.D.  
Chief, Psychological Services Division  
Office of Medical Services

SUBJECT: Comments Regarding Draft IG Report on PSD/OMS

1. Given the complex organization of this Draft IG Report, the ordering of PSD comments herein simply parallels the sequencing of the Draft (and does not imply any rank order of importance associated with the comments). The reader is to note that PSD's copy of the Draft encompassed primarily those pages wherein the IG Team discussed matters relevant to PSD.

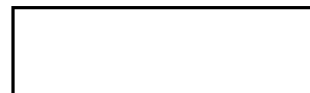
2. Comments:

Scantron System

p. 69. The Draft describes the Scantron System (automated test scoring system) as "make shift" and "prone to error". In point of fact, Scantron is "top of the line" equipment with an error rate far below that of a human test scorer. In point of fact, the burgeoning demands upon the equipment (purchased ca. 1981) driven by increased testing loads have accelerated the "aging process" -- present Scantron equipment is simply "wearing out". PSD has proposed purchase of replacement equipment (FY 87 - FY 91 time frame) at a total cost of approximately \$130,000 (1986 price quote).

OMS Automation

pp 70-71. PSD heartily endorses Draft comments regarding better integration of automation efforts within OMS and expanded support to these efforts at the Directorate level.



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Testing Section

pp 74-75. The Draft comments regarding the Testing Section as "a suspected locus of T&A cheating" are among the most critical and serious (legally) of the Team's report of findings in PSD. The matter has been reviewed by this author along with DC/PSD, C/AB and C/TS and a plan is being developed to monitor T&A more closely in the future and thus forestall any such accusations in the future. (This author must register concern over the cited data base for the accusations: "We were told by at least four individuals..." as well as concern that only 50% of the Testing Section staff were interviewed -- hardly as representative of the Section as the 91% OMS interview rate cited earlier.

The PATB

p 75. All comments in the Draft regarding the PATB point up the continuing need for a more active PSD role in the area of consumer education, especially to the point that PATB data and subsequent CGRS reports do not employ cutoff scores (there is no pass-fail) relevant to selection nor are specific recommendations vis-a-vis employment included in the CGRS report. Further, there is no factual support for the statement that CGRS CPI reports are in violation of the guidelines promulgated either by EEO or the American Psychological Association. (Again, this author registers his concern over the data base cited in support of these comments.)

PATB (cont'd)

p. 76. There is no element in Agency selection processing which has been subjected to more rigorous validation research and yet is more routinely challenged than the PATB. The statement that PSD "...continues to resist any changes" is quite erroneous given both the dramatic restructuring of PATB in 1984 as well as development of CGRS in 1985. Also erroneous is the statement DS&T: "...does not use the PATB". (Only two DS&T Offices currently do not use PATB as an adjunct to selection processing.) As to speculation whether DI will continue PATB use, RB/PSD (at direction of the DDI) is preparing a final draft of their study of the relationship between PATB

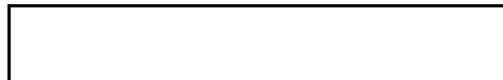
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measures (gathered prior to EOD) and later performance in the role of DI analyst. As to speculation regarding the extent to which Agency managers understand/utilize PATB findings, the dramatic surge in demand for PATB reports of findings (from 7,802 in FY 83 to 14,472 in FY 86) surely sheds some light on this question.

Division Merger

pp. 36-ff. In regard to Draft comments about a merger of MSD/PSD the statement: "A merger would leave open the question of what to do with the Research Branch in PSD". Whether or not a merger takes place, it is critical that the reader understand that PSD's Testing Section and Assessment Branch cannot perform their functions without routine/daily direct support from the Research Branch.

3. Certainly, this author appreciates the difficulty which faces any IG Team in collating, sorting and integrating the information they gather. It is, however, disappointing that nowhere in the Draft materials provided PSD were there comments about our initiatives in developing: a specialized "test packet" program in support of OED, PINS and now, CTP processing (725 "packets" processed in FY 86); expanded employee testing (2,136 processed in FY 86) and; special concentration of Testing Section resources to provide career counseling for employees (703 employees counselled in FY 86). All of these referenced initiatives occurred during a two year time frame which saw the "regular work load" increase an average of over 50% while PSD authorized release of two of its Assessment Psychologists to provide critical support to CAD and MSD. Throughout all this time, the PSD cadre have performed Herculean tasks and not once have they fallen behind in production demands. The exhortation from the Team regarding improvement in PSD's recruiting efforts does not fall on deaf ears. It would be more meaningful, however, had the Team presented specific suggestions beyond noting past history of possible gathering of all Agency psychologists (specifically BAB in OTS) into OMS. PSD and BAB support each others recruiting efforts and are well aware that BAB and PSD share the common experience of relatively unprofitable recruiting efforts.



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